



JOURNEY of the SOUL



*"And they ask you,
[Oh Muhammad],
about the soul. Say,
'The soul is the
Command of my
Lord.' And mankind
has not been given
knowledge except
for a little." {17:85}*



MUSLIM FOUNDATION INC was founded and implemented in New Jersey in 1980. It consisted of several sub-committees with one primary branch. MFI itself was mainly a socio-economic and religious Organization established for the advancement, benefit and welfare of the Community. It is well-established and successful by the Grace of God, and set as a vibrant Organization. Its headquarters is now based in Somerset NJ which is comprised of a multi-Complex including *Masjid-e-Ali*. It will be an all-encompassing venue *Inshallah*.

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Both *MFI* and *Pyame Aman* are today a household name not only in New Jersey but in North America by the Grace of Allah.

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Journey of the Soul After Death

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Journey of the Soul after Death

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Note from the Publisher

The book is neither intended to scare the readers nor encourage everyone to become a saint by undertaking extraordinary good deeds and noble tasks. It is a simple narration of what happens after death mostly based on various well-known *Ahadith* of the last Prophet. In fact, no one really knows what takes place after death. Literature abounds on what will happen during the time of *Barzakh* and at the time of *Qiyamah*, the two known stages after death; however there is no definite information available as to what is in store for an individual soon after the burial and thereafter. Imam Ali once said, *"People are sleeping while living and will be awakened after death."* This book provides a glimpse of what may happen when we all finally wake up.

There is a famous *Hadith* of the Prophet which tell us that *"this land (the living world) is the farmland for the other world after death, and you shall reap whatever you sow in this present world."* The Quran says *"Man is certainly in loss, except those who believe, and do good and enjoin truth on one another to bear with fortitude (the trials that befall)."* (103:2-3)

The famous saying of our Imams is well-known that the best deeds in this world are to abstain from *haraam* and not to miss any *wajibat*.

As a Muslim, particularly Shias, we are expected to be better than others. Except for those who just get carried away, for whose excesses there is always the door of *Istighfar* which remains open. This booklet may provide an incentive for the pious and sincere soul searchers to perform better in this world and to earn better results in the world hereafter.

For those *Momineen* who do not follow their obligations and do not care to do *Istighfar*, then regrettably, sad tidings will await them after their demise. They also have to keep in mind that if they miss their obligations towards Allah and sincerely do *Istighfar*, then He with all His Mercy and Compassion may just pardon them. But as He is *Adl* (just) which of course includes His duties and obligations towards other human beings, these would not be condoned unless fellow human beings pardon them.

The narrations in this book are from a learned Islamic Scholar who knew the ins and outs of the Islamic *Shariah*. Even he had to suffer a lot after death. What we will face as an ordinary Muslim, only Allah knows better!

The Readers are requested to go through this book with an open mind using their own common sense. But at the same token, they should also strive to change their life in accordance with the principles of Islamic *Shariah*. At least, make an honest attempt.

May the readers' good deeds and change of heart after reading this text benefit the undersigned in washing his sins too!

Wa-Salam,

Syed Manzoor Rizvi, MD

Message of Peace Inc.

Pyame Aman

New Jersey, USA

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May Allah reward them and their families with the Blessings of our Ahlul Bayt for their dedication, contribution and efforts.
Ameen.

PROLOGUE

This work deals with the situation faced by a person after death. The entire book is based on the correct knowledge of Islamic laws, rules and regulation, and the primary significance of performance of mandatory rituals summed up under the heading of *Furooe Deen*, i.e. the branches of faith, which spring out of the strong faith in *Usoole Deen*, i.e. the roots of faith (Divine Oneness, Divine Justice, prophet hood, *Imamat*, and Day of Judgment).

Every person should realize, once and for all, that the human body perishes with death while the immortal soul of each individual passes through the various stages of suffering, which is vividly depicted in this booklet translated from the work of Maulana Najafi Qochaani.

The journey of the human soul after death faces many ordeals. Actually these ordeals start even before death. This booklet deals with the various stages through which the soul goes through and faces after death. There are Islamic practices recommended by our fourteen Infallibles (*Chahardah Masoomeen*) which may help the soul of the dead to overcome the tortures of the various stages and ease the journey. The Prophet and his progeny are reported to have emphasized the dangers in various stages. The Prophet advises the people to earn enough awards by leading a virtuous life on earth to avoid these ordeals.

Imam Ali says in his work *Nahjul Balagha*, "*O people prepare yourself for your last journey. May God have mercy on you. The herald of death is calling upon you; 'Departure, Departure,' you will face several dangers on the way.*" Imam Ali made this announcement every night in the Prophet's Mosque before heading to bed.

First Stage: The first stage in the journey of the soul is called *Sakaraat*, or the over-powering of the human body by death. The

Quran (50:19) describes this very difficult stage. On the one side you have the struggle with death itself -- the heart stops, the breathing terminates, the powers of the body recede, while the dying person remembers his family, wife and children and yearns for them, lest they should suffer after him. Sheikh Saddooq refers to Imam Jafar Sadiq, who advises a man to be kind and loving to his wife and children, and kind and obedient to his parents so that the struggle of death eases for him. Goodness and kindness to blood relations eases death and makes life comfortable for a person according to the Imam. The Prophet recommends the recitation of *Suras Ya Seen, Saafat*, and reciting '*La-ilaha-illallaahil Halmun Karim...*' in *Qunoot* to ease the struggle with death.

Second Stage: The second stage is called *Adila Indal Maut*. This involves the reversion from truth to falsehood and the intrusion of doubts in the dying person about *Deen* – his religion. Satan approaches the dying person, and misguides him to doubt his own faith, compelling his heart to be bereft of faith. The remedy against this ill is the unflinching faith in *Usoole Deen* along with their logic and rationale. The reciting of *Duae Adila* at the time of death is also helpful. A ring with ruby engraved with '*Muhammadun Rasoolillah Aliun Waliullah*' is of use. Reciting '*Bismillahir Rehmaanir Raheem*' seven times after morning and *maghrib* is good. Reciting *Sura Al Momineen* on each Friday is also beneficial.

Third Stage: The third stage of hardship is the loneliness of the grave. This is more terrifying than the above two. It is advisable to keep the dead body for some time near the grave, so that the body gets ready and adjusted for burial. After death, the capacity of understanding of the departed one leaves the body only partially, as it sees and feels all. According to the Prophet, the first night in the grave is more troublesome. So, we should give in charity for the benefit of the departed one and read the *Salaat* of *Wahshate Qabr*, which enjoins in the first *rakat* *Ayatul*

Kursi after *Sura Al-Faitha* and in the second *rakat* after *Sura Al-Fatiha*, recite ten times *Sura Qadr*. After the prayer, ask Allah to give the *Sawaab* for these prayers to the departed soul. Saying a hundred times 'La-illaaha illallahul malikul haqqul mobin' daily and reciting *Sura Ya Seen* before sleeping every night also helps.

Fourth Stage: The fourth stage is *Fashaarev Qabr*. This is the most overwhelming. The grave shrinks and crushes the bones of the dead. It is said the grave announces everyday that it is the place of solitary confinement as well as the stage of mercy. For some virtuous beings the grave is a heavenly garden and for some vicious ones it is a pit of hellfire. Imam Jafar Sadiq says that the grave's *Fashaar* is meant for every *Momin*, but there are ways to escape it. These ways are:

(1) According to Imam Ali, reciting *Sura Nisaa* each Friday saves a *Momin* from *Fashaar*.

(2) If one recites *Sura Zukhruf* regularly, he is saved from *Fashaar* and the vermin of the grave.

(3) According to Imam Jafar Sadiq one who dies between the *zawaal* (declining of the sun towards the west) of Thursday and Friday, is saved from *Fashaar*.

(4) According to Imam Reza, the night prayers (*Namaaze Shab*), if offered regularly guarantees safety from *Fashaar*.

(5) According to the Prophet reciting *Alhaakumut takaasuru* (102) before sleeping every night delivers a person from *Fashaar* as well as the tortures of the grave.

(6) He who is buried in Najafe Ashraf is saved from *Fashaar*.

Fifth Stage: The fifth stage is the interrogation of the angels *Munkir* and *Nakeer*. These questions are given in the relevant part of this book. According to Imam Jafar Sadiq, he who denies the reality of interrogation in the grave is not a Shia or a friend of the Ahlul Bayt. That is why *Talqeen* (reciting the questions and

answers) twice after burial is very helpful. Upon hearing it, the angels do not feel the need of interrogation and hence turn away.

Sixth Stage: The sixth stage is *Barzakh* – an existence of sheer helplessness as this book relates. Here one's good deeds, and gifts and blessings of the family help the dead. The bereaved family should recite *Sura Waaqiya* (56) and *Sura Dahar* (76) for the departed soul, which act like gifts being sent to the dead during the *Barzakh* stage, as the book relates in details.

Seventh Stage: The seventh stage is the Day of Judgment or *Qiyamaat* which has been discussed in detail in both the Quran and Ahadith.

Author's Note

In the Name of Allah the Beneficent and the Merciful

All praises for the Lord of the worlds, the Master of this world and the Day of Judgment.

Many salutations to the Prophet and his Progeny, who said that the friendship of the world is like a serious ailment which is at the root of all ills of the human beings. Other ailments are the offshoots of this friendship. The cure of all ailments is to keep this fact always in your thoughts that one has to die one day. The author who takes himself as the most humble servant of Allah had already written his thoughts from the period when he was a student under the title, *The Tour of the East* (ca. 1307 Hijra). I suggest that the present writing on the World of Purgatory should be entitled, *The Tour of the West* (ca.1312 Hijra) so that it can serve as a source of advice and instruction to the community and let it serve as a gift from the author.

As a matter of fact our body which is composed of matter is like a thick curtain between this world and the world beyond and death is another name of raising this thick curtain. After emerging out of this opaque curtain, man starts looking at things which he could not see earlier. He comes to know those truths which were earlier beyond his reach. The Quran says: *"You were ignorant of this; I removed the curtain from you (after your death) so that you can vividly see the world beyond Death."* (50:22) So, the fact remains that everyone dies.

Here is the narration by a man delineating what happened to him after his death.

Syed Hasan Najfi Qochaani

Chapter 1: Start of the Journey

No sooner did I die I found that the ailment of my body had disappeared, and I was now hale and hearty. My friends and relatives were wailing and mourning around my corpse. I felt sad at their mourning and tried to tell them that I was not dead; and that my ailment had actually ended, but it seemed no one was listening to me. I thought that no one could see or listen to me. I realized that they were far from me and they were concentrating on my corpse especially the face and left side of my shoulder as these were not covered.

Later, my dead body was washed and wrapped in a shroud and after other chores it was taken to the grave yard. I also accompanied my funeral procession. I saw in the procession various types of animals and wild beasts of whom I was afraid, but the other people in the procession were neither scare nor hurt from the basses, as if they were their pets and were familiar with them. They finally reached the grave yard and started preparing to lower my dead body in the grave; I remained standing by the side of the grave and saw that my corpse was lowered in the grave head down. As soon as the corpse reached the grave, animals of different types appeared there from nowhere. On observing them I felt untold fear and worry? Suddenly the animals attacked the corpse, but the person who was lowering the corpse in the grave was not afraid of them and was unconcerned with their attack. It seemed he was not noticing them.

After laying my corpse inside the grave the man came out of the grave. As it was my dead body so I stayed back by the side of the grave to see how my dead body reacted to the coming situation. I tried to disengage the animals but they were so numerous that they overpowered me. Moreover, I was so terrified that my whole being was shaking. I tried to call the people outside the grave to help me but none came to my aid. They were busy with their chores as if they were unconcerned with what was happening inside the grave. Suddenly some people

appeared inside the grave and helped me. On seeing these people the animals ran away. I asked them who they were for they had helped me in great trouble. They replied with a smile that they were my good deeds and the animals that were tormenting me were my bad deeds. This reminded me of divine words that good deeds dispelled evil deeds -- "*innal hasanaat yadhaheenus sayyaat.*" After saying these words they disappeared.

Now I regained my composure and observed that the grave had been covered and I was left in the dark and narrow cell. I saw them all including my relatives and dear and near ones returning and leaving me alone. These dear and near ones were those for whom comfort I had tried myself day and night. The pain of their being unfaithful and the narrowness and darkness of the grave saddened me so much that I was about to suffer a heart burst.

I had never before faced such helplessness, fear, and terror. In order to pacify me I started diverting my attention from all happenings and concentrated only on Allah. I sat near the head of the corpse, and waited for what happened next. I suddenly felt the grave shaking and dust started falling from the walls and the roof of the grave. There was greater tumult towards the feet of the body as if some large animal was trying to enter the grave by making a large opening.

Finally the grave cracked and I saw two persons entering. Their faces were terrifying and they appeared to be very strong physically.¹ Both of these were dragon-like in appearance. Fire was emitting from their nostrils and mouth along with a profusion of smoke. They were holding in their hands red hot iron rods which sparkled like flumes of fire. Suddenly their terrible voice reverberated inside the grave. Their voice was so terrible that the earth and the sky seemed to shake with it. In the same dreadful

¹ The chastisement in the grave and the questionings of *Munkir* and *Nakir*, and the appearance of snakes and scorpions inside the grave appear in several religious conventions. For details see the writings of Sheikh Sadooiq and Majlisi.

tenor they addressed my corpse and asked: "*Man rabbok*" – "*Who is your lord?*" I practically lost my senses in their dreadful presence and my tongue could not utter a word. Assuming that the soul-less body would not be able to reply to them I was sure that they would beat the corpse with their rods, and the grave would be filled with fire. In my helplessness I became apprehensive of the grave being filled with fire, so I myself answered their question. At this moment I thought of Allah who help people in distress and provide succor to the helpless. I also thought in my heart of Imam Ali for I believed that he was the solution of all problems of the human beings, and he had the power and status that he could help in all conditions and states. I had lived my whole life in his love, and had died in his love. I had known him to be source of succor provided by Allah and a blessing for mankind when they are in the toughest circumstances.

This state of extreme trouble, in the words of the Quran is "*You will see (on the Day of Judgment) men who look like drunken ones and actually they are not drunk.*" (3:22) The foregoing holy verse depicts the condition of extreme human worry on the Day of Judgment. The apparent drunkenness is actually extreme chastisement from the Lord on that day. In that condition, Imam Ali also comes to the assistance of his followers. Thus, as soon as I begged for the intercession of Imam Ali, my heart received strength and solace, and I could manage to speak. But my long silence angered both of them; their eyes started emitting sparks and their faces became more dreadful. They repeated their question in a more horrifying voice. They lifted their rods as if to strike. But I replied to them in a weak and low voice, "*Huwal-laahul lazi laa ilaha illa huwa. Alimil ghaibi wash shahadata huwa rahmaanur raheem. Huwal laabul lazi laa ilaaha illah huwal malikul quddusu salaamul mominul moheimunul azizul jabbaarul matakabbir. Subhaanal lahi amma mushrikoon.*" "*He is Allah; there is no Allah but Him. He knows the present and the occult. He is Rahman (compassionate) and Rahim (merciful). There is no*

Allah but He, the king and clean one of all vices, the protector of all, the lord and creator of all the worlds. He is the victor and all powerful, glorious and lofty. He has no defect and is beyond all that for which people make Him the sharer.”²(Quran: 22-23)

I could recall this verse of the Quran because I always enchanted these words at the end of my morning prayers. I thought it necessary to repeat the verse because I wanted to establish my superiority over the two, so that they did not remain under the delusion that the children of Adam were devoid of wisdom and perfection. They, the angels, had criticized Adam’s creation on day one and I wanted to dispel their delusion that the children of Adam were only the cause of disturbance, violence and blood shedding.

As soon as I recited this verse, their anger disappeared and their faces lost their harsh ferociousness. One of them said to the other that perhaps I was an Islamic scholar. So they decided to ask me the rest of the questions in a soft manner. But the other said that their duty to ask questions was a divine order and their speed of questioning need not be change. And they had not yet asked the last question as their attitude towards me depended on the right answer to that particular question. Whoever I might be they still did not trust me. They shot their next question: “*Mman nabi uka*” – “*Who is your prophet?*” I had greater strength in my heart by now and as a result replied without any hesitation: “*Nabiati wa rasoolullahi ilannas kaaftan mohammad bin abdullah, sallahu aleihi wa aalihi khatiminnabiyyin wa syedil mursalin*” – “*The Prophet and Messenger of Allah, Muhammad bin Abdullah, God bless him and his progeny.*”

² This verse could only be recited by the person who must have devoted his whole worldly life to do research in faith, philanthropy, virtuous deeds and high moral principles. Those of us who would follow such a person would fare in a similar way. The ignorant, lovers of the world, unlettered and tyrants would fare entirely contrary and woefully. Men should perform deeds of virtue and avoid sins and not to repeat the unintentional mistakes and beg for divine forgiveness.

This answer totally dispelled their wrath and their faces now shone with pleasure with the earlier terror evaporated. Then they questioned me about the Book, *Qibla*, *Imam* and Caliph of the Messenger. I answered: "My book is the gracious Quran, which was revealed by God to the wise Prophet, and my Qibla is the Kaaba and Masjidul Haram which all Muslims turn towards in prayer wherever they may be. The Masjidul Haram is the High Truth in exterior and interior. I turn my face towards the Creator of the skies and the earth. I am a pure believer and I am not a polytheist. My Imam and the successor to the Prophet are twelve, the first being Ali ibne Abu Talib and the last being the Hujjat of Allah, son of Hasan Al-Askari, who is the Imam of our era and epoch and whose obedience is mandatory on us all. All the Imams are pious and clean of all defects and misguidance: they are the testimony in this world and means of forgiveness in the hereafter."

I narrated the details of each and every Imam, with parentage and titles of virtue. They said there was no need for all the details. The answer to one word was just one word. But I told them that the detail was necessary for their edification, for angels had been suspicious of human beings from day one.³

I continued telling them, "You objected to our creation which amounts to objecting to divine wisdom. From the day I comprehended your objection, I was determined to question you personally whenever I got an opportunity so that I could argue with you till the finish. But it is unfortunate that I met you when I am surrounded by troubles and you are appointed by Allah to question me about the articles of faith. How can I dare to challenge you now?" So I became silent.

³ The answer was given in Arabic. It has been rendered in English as a lay man would find it difficult to intone the entire Arabic text. (Translator)

I waited for the next question, but they didn't ask any. They simply enquired from where I got my answers. This upset me as I thought that the arguments I'd prepared in the transitory world about faith might not be valid in this other world. Possibly even Aristotle, the king of argumentation might be considered wrong in this other world. I had in mind that Aristotle's arguments had some defects. Even if his arguments were right they were the stuff to support the blind in the dark of human world. Now that all darkness has disappeared and every thing is crystal clear, what would be the value of my arguments of the human world? I wondered what they wanted from me. O Lord, I am new to this world and ignorant of the people here and unaware of their nature. *"Allah, by Ali ibne Abu Talib, please help me"*.

I was lost in my thoughts and supplication to Allah, when I heard their lightning-like anger asking me: *"Why don't you reply?"* I looked at their faces which were so terrible that I could not continue looking at them. Their eyes emitted flames and their mouths were wide open like that of a camel and their large yellow teeth were visible. Their hot iron rods were raised high as if to strike me. I lost my senses in terror. Suddenly I felt a divine inspiration so I replied in a weak voice, *"Zaalekal amru hadaanil laahu ileihi."* – *"Allah guided me in these matters"*.⁴ I heard them say, *"Nam naumatul urus"* – *"Sleep peacefully like a bride"*.

With this they went away and I felt as if I was sleeping, or perhaps the terror had numbed my senses and I felt unconscious. Realizing that their terror was over I was in deep sleep.

⁴ It implies that in matters of faith like *Tauheed*, Justice, Prophethood, *Imamaat*, Justice, and Day of Judgment must be understood with logic. Blindly following an *Aalim* (*Taqleed*) in these matters is prohibited (*Haram*), and blindly following one's forefathers is also not valid.

Chapter 2: Start of *Barzakh*

As I woke up, I found myself in a small room which was well carpeted with fine carpets. A handsome youth with comely hair and fragrant body was sitting near me with my head on his lap. He awaited my awakening. I got up to salute him in honor. He got up smiling and returned my salutation. He treated me with great affection, embraced me and said, *"Please sit down; I am no prophet or Imam, but your companion and friend."* I said, *"Who are you and what your name is? I'm lucky that you are my companion. I wish to always be with you."*

He replied, "I am Hadi, also known as Abul Wafa and Abu Turab. The last answer that you gave to the angels in the grave was given in your heart by me. If you did not give that answer, they would thoroughly beat you with their iron rods, and your grave would be filled with hell fire."

I said, "I am greatly obliged to your kindness and mercy: in fact I am freed by you, but their last question was not in order, and simply prolonged the argument. I had given correct replies regarding the Islam faith and the matters averred by a person out of his tongue need not be subjected to argumentation. For instance, if you put a flame of fire on a man's palm and he says that his hand is burning, it is absurd to comment on the fact. If an ignoramus asks the question, the befitting retort is 'don't you see, are you blind?' Their last question falls into such a category."

Hadi said, "It isn't so because a man's statement is usually not factual. It is probable that the tongue may utter the truth but the heart may not believe in what the tongue utters. Belief by heart is vital so that it may lead to actual faith; otherwise a man of bad faith only expresses oral faith and does not believe in what he says. It has been said: (in the Quran) *'Laa Taqoolu Aamanna Wa Laakin Qoolu Aslamna Wa Lamaa Yudikhilul Imaana Fi Gulubikum.'* – *'Do not say we have accepted Iman, say we have accepted Islam and Iman does not enter your hearts.'* On day one

also, in response to *alastu birabbikum* (am I not your lord?) all said Balaa (Yes) but none confessed Iman over the Lord in the sense of true faith, as was divinely desired."

I asked, "How?" Hadi replied: "In the material world, where a person is faced with the hardship caused by observance of faith, many individual opt out of performance of rituals, but after death in the world, all face the questions asked by the angles in the grave. At this stage all – faithful as well as hypocrites – answer the question aright. That is why this last question is asked. If faith has entered the heart, then the reply is what you gave, but if faith is only traditional following and not heartfelt belief, their hollowness of faith is exposed. As you well know this is what the sayings of infallible Imams and Prophet (Masoomeen) tell us."

I said, "Yes, the traditions and sayings of the Masoomeen have these details, but the terror of the questioning had deprived me of all senses; hence I forgot all. May God reward you, and may I never be left without your company. Now please tell me since when you know me for I never saw you before. I have become so attached to you that separation from you would kill me."

He said, "I have been with you since your birth and love you, but you never felt me because in the material world your eyesight was too weak to see me. In fact, I am that relation of love and devotion that you have for Imam Ali ibne Abu Talib and the Ahlul Bayt. My attachment to a person is in proportion to the love and devotion in him for the Masoomeen, i.e. according to his ability and that is why I am named Hadi. In other words, the love of the Ahlul Bayt guides one to good deeds according to the capacity of a person. I was your Hadi due to your good deeds for Imam Ali ibne Abu Talib who is guide, leader and imam of all pious persons. Remember the verse from Quran (2:2) *'Zaalikal kitaabu laa raib fihi hudallil muttaqin.'* – *'This book, which is without doubt, is the source of guidance to people of piety.'* Hence the book and I, we both are your attachment that you had towards those Masoomeen. I am the strong rope (Urwatul wusqa). *'Fa*

manyakfur bit-taaghooti wa yaminu billaahi faqad ismasaka bil urwatil musqa; lanfisaawa laha.’ – ‘He who rejects the devils and believes in Allah, he has got hold of the strong rope and there is no separation for him.’ I would never separate from you but for your worldly desires and improper emotions, which could take you away. That’s why I am nicknamed Abul Wafa and Abu Turab.”⁵

“In short, I am created out of Imam Ali’s noor (light,) and I stayed in your heart in proportion to your deeds according to his commands. My competence to stay with you was determined by your virtuous deeds and I left you when you sinned. In this world also I shall accompany you when you are rewarded for your good deeds but during chastisement for your sins you will miss me. Remember the verse 117 of the Quran in chapter Aale Imraan: ‘Allah does not tyrannize (his bondsmen, but they tyrannize their own selves.’ Anyway, today is your last of the material world and the first day of the other world. I leave you now to let you have rest; I am a divine pledge endowed to you. The glorious Quran is full of my description, but you don’t even recognize me. Adieu.”

Hadi went away and I was left alone. As I started to meditate, it dawned on me that the worldly life was like a dream, and after

⁵ Here the author has presented the love for Imam Ali and Ahlul Bayat as personified to highlight the fact that the love of Ahlul Bayt helps one at every stage, A *hadith* of the Prophet,--*man maata ala hub-i-aale mohammad maata shaheeda*—he who dies in the love of Muhammad’s progeny dies the death of a martyr, supports this statement. Imam Muhammad Baqar told Abu Khalid Kabuli: “By God, the love of us, Ahlul Bayt, so enlightens the heart of a Momin as the noon-time sun brightens the day.” Imam Shafai said, “I have held God’s rope firmly which we are ordained to do. And God’s rope is the love of Ahlul Bayt.” But mere verbal declaration of the love of Ahlul Bayt is not enough. The eighth Imam, Ali Reza said, “We do not possess the license of freedom from hell-fire, and our intercession cannot overcome the Divine will and Justice. He who is obedient to Allah, is our friend; and he who disobeys Allah, is our enemy.” The foregoing makes it clear that the claim of love of Ahlul Bayt is correct only when one’s deed support this claim, which is liked by the *Masoomeen*. Otherwise committing sins on the strength of love of Ahlul Bayt is like cheating oneself.--Translator.

death that sleep was broken and the interpretation of the dream cleared the mind just as the legendary Alexander Zulqernain realized the reality of the sand of the ocean of darkness on reaching the area of light and repented his folly.

Woe onto what is sinned against Allah. "*Ala ma farrat-tu fi janbillah.*" (Quran 39:56) This means that I sinned and did not realize that Allah was present and saw all. But now that the door to forgiveness (*Tauba*) was shut, feeling sorry and repentant was in vain. In this state of worry and hesitation I felt sleepy.

The Pressure of the Grave--*Fishaar*

After a short while I started facing another problem. I realized that two strangers were sitting on my left and right. The person on the right was handsome while the one on the left ugly. Both smelt my limbs from top to toe. They had big files in their hands. They were writing in the files. They had some big and small boxes in which they kept something and then sealed them. They smell limbs repeatedly, like heart, thinking power, guessing power, brain, eyes, tongue, ears, whispering between themselves, smelling twice and thrice. Again they wrote and sealed something in the boxes. I kept my body motionless so that they could not guess that I was conscious and awake. But I was in great terror because I realized they were recording my good and bad deeds.

From what I heard of their whisperings I could guess that the handsome person was my well-wisher and did not allow to record certain bad deeds of mine, because I had asked forgiveness for them (*Tauba*) and did not indulge in those deeds again. Often I heard him commenting that a certain bad deed was offset by a certain good deed, and the sin was changed to virtue as by chemical enrichment clay become gold. After they finished writing they wrapped the record round my neck like a metal round. All the sealed boxes were put in a large bag which was kept near my head. Then they brought an iron contraption which was like a strong net of my full length. They placed me inside the

contraption and tightened it with nuts and bolt. They started moving a lever which further tightened it around me. Due to their moving of its lever I felt so enclosed inside the contraption that I found it difficult to breathe. I became very small and hot as it crushed all my bones and my body oozed out like thick black curdles. They picked up the dark tar and I lost consciousness.

When again I came to my senses, my head was on the lap of Hadi. I said to him, "*Hadi forgive me for my bad manners, but I feel so weak that all my limbs appear to be broken. I cannot control my breath and cannot utter words properly.*" My voice had become very feeble and tears filled my eyes. It looked as if I was complaining to Hadi about his absence. This was the first experience of *Fishaar*, the pressure of the grave. Hadi tried to pacify me by saying that whatever I had faced was the necessity of the first stop of the other world. Everyone had to face it, not only me. He expressed the hope that it was over and would not be repeated, and that all the dangers in this other world were the result of my past deeds.

He told me that the iron contraption was the result of my own bad deeds, such as greed, self-love and jealousy. The first turned Adam out of paradise, the second expelled Satan from the divine presence, and the third made Cain (Qabeel) the fuel of hell.⁶ These three evil deeds branch out into thousands of evil deeds in proportion to the morals of men. Hadi continued to

⁶ The chastisements of pressure of grave and purgatory, *Fishaar* and *Barzakh* are connected with those evil deeds of the people for which forgiveness (*Taubah*) was not asked in the material world. It has no connection with faith and atheism. It is likely that a pure believer, who is not infallible (*Masoom*), may suffer this chastisement; for a person may commit sin whose chastisement he has to tolerate. This is explained by a tradition that the funeral procession of Saad bin Maaz, a venerable companion of the Prophet, was accompanied by the Prophet. The Prophet personally placed him in the grave; he prayed and blessed Saad and announced that Jibreel and Mikaeil and other angels joined the procession. Saad's mother opined that her son was lucky that the Prophet accompanied the procession barefooted and bareheaded. The Prophet told her to keep quiet as she could not save Saad from *Fishaar*; for Saad's treatment of his relatives was not good. So Saad was facing *Fishaar* at that moment. God is glorious!

console me with his pleasant conversation as he massaged my limbs. This removed my pain and I felt rejuvenated. Due to what I had gone through my limbs were cleared of all filth and shone brightly. I now realized that *Fishaar* is a process of purification. Through this process the filth and dirt of moral defects and evils are filtered from a human being on entering the other world. This is what is meant by the statements of our *Masoomen* that the mother's milk comes out of the brain but as the milk originates from the menstrual blood it is dark and is a type of filth and it is no surprise that this dark and filthy liquid filters in the process of *Fishaar*.

In reply to my question Hadi told me that the large bag contained my burden. He asked me to open it so that he could see my travel kit. As I opened the bag out came all the sealed boxes. On some of these boxes there was the name of the place where these were to be used. There were also some pouches which contained some indicated stuff to be used against dangers of particular points and some showed indications of places where these were to be opened depending on their contents. I asked Hadi what these boxes were. I was told that these boxes contained the details of activities undertaken by me on various points of time during my earthly days and nights. Whenever I was performing any virtuous and evil deeds these boxes would open automatically to keep a record of those deeds safely. Now these deeds were before me. I also asked about the round object wrapped around my neck. I was told that this round object enlists the account of my actions, good or bad which would determine my position of either to be punished or rewarded during reckoning on the Day of Judgment. It was not needed in the interregnum in *Barzakh* as is evidenced by the thirteenth verse of *Sura Asraa (Bani Israel)* of the Quran: "*Wa kulla insannin alzamnaabu taayirahu fi unugihi wa yakhruju lahu yauma qiyaamati kitaaban yalgaahu manshooran.*" – "*And we have hung everyone their record of deeds around thier neck; on the Day of*

Judgment will bring out for him a text which he will find spread before him."

Hadi observed that I did not have many good deeds in my record which might help me in securing good favor from Allah. He advised me to stay at that place for a few weeks and hope that my relatives living in the past world might pray for me to help me pull up to good favor. He reminded me of the Holy Prophet's *Hadith* that the more travel material (good deeds) one has the better. Then Hadi said, *"I go now to obtain a travel permit for you from the master of both the worlds, for no permit has been issued for a whole week. You may visit your family on the night of Friday; perhaps they may remember you and seek mercy and pardon from Allah."*

Hadi left and I stayed, waiting for his return. The place of my sojourn was very good; the room had a fine carpet with nice designs. The days passed and the night of Friday finally arrived, but Hadi did not come back. Following the advice of Hadi, I visited the world in the form of a white bird. I entered my home and sat on a branch to observe things. I saw those of my family whom I had left behind and felt sorry. I saw that they had a gathering of mourning for the benefit of my soul; mutton-rice was being cooked in cauldron and served for all the friends and relatives. I felt that all this was being done as a custom of the world and for ostentation. All the invitees were rich people not qualified for any feeding; not a single beggar or man in need was invited. How could this type of feast benefit me? The invitees were simply gathered to complete the formalities for a worldly custom. I heard them complaining about lapse in their hospitality for which they were even cursing the departed soul. Moreover the weeping in the *Majlis* was not for Husain the son of Imam Ali, but for their own reasons. One was weeping saying that his patron had died; another one was worried about his monthly cash assistance. In other words, they were simply worried about their own personal

reasons. They were not praying for the departed soul and they did not care about the deceased position in the world after death.⁷

I felt deeply saddened by their ways. They were complaining to Allah as if Allah had tyrannized them. They were protesting against the Divine wisdom. I lost all hope in them and returned in sorrow to the graveyard and to my place from where I had gone into the world. I was about to utter my disgust with them, but checked myself thinking of their bad luck losing me.

Inside I found Hadi with a plate of fresh apples. I asked from where the apples came. I was told that someone who visited my grave cited *Surae Fateha*. This deed was selfless so Allah in his munificence sent this gift to me. Hadi blessed that good human being and busied himself with setting my room in order. Golden seat and chairs were set about. Chandeliers were hung by the ceiling which spread brightness like sunlight.

Seeing all this I asked Hadi the reason for the decoration. I was told that those sons of Imams whose graves I had visited in the world, and the *Ulemaa* whom I named in the night prostration (*Namaze Shab*) with supplications for them after coming to know that I died and embarked upon the journey to this world, were visiting me for my friendship and love towards them. I realized how lucky I am and forgot all the pain I had felt on visiting my family in the world. I reflected with happiness on the good luck of a sinner like me. I complained to Hadi on the small size of my room, which was not fit for the august visitors. Hadi told me that the room would automatically become large on the arrival of these exalted guests.

⁷ Allama Majlisi writes in his book, *Haqqul Yaqeen* that the souls of the departed visit their relations once in a week, month, or year in the form of a bird. These birds perch on the wall of the house and observe all. The souls are pleased if the family left behind is happy and well doing. Otherwise they feel sorry. Another tradition has it that the souls of believers (*Momineen*) visit their families near sunset on Friday night. Allah sends an angel with these souls. If the family left behind is in dire situation, the angel hides it from the soul so that it may not suffer.

The visitors arrived and took their seats according to their status. They had bright faces, especially that of Hazrat Abul Fazl Abbas and Janabe Ali Akbar. Both these august individuals sat on a golden seat. I observed that both were in a battle dress, with a helmet and sword. I wondered why they still have to wear the battle uniform in this world of the dead, but could not utter a word due to their awe. Hadi, I and others stood bent in reverence before the august two. I was lost in observing them. Suddenly Hazrat Abbas said to Hadi, "Have you obtained from my venerable father the travel permit for this fellow?" Hadi replied, "Yes, sir," and recited this Ayat of Surae Rahman from Quran (55:33); "*Ya maashar al jinne walins in istatum an tanfuzu min aqtaaris samawaqil wal arzi fanfazu la tanfuzuna illa hisultan odgins and humans,*" – "Can you go out of the limits of the sky and the earth? Never, but only with God-given strength."

After hearing this verse, Hazrat Abbas turned to me and said, "The King of Power i.e., my father's discretion in this verse is your permit of deliverance. Congratulations." On this encouragement to a slave like me, I bent down and kissed the earth before him, then straightened. This encouragement of the august beings filled my eyes with tears. Habib ibne Mazahir, who was standing beside me, whispered in my ear, "You have been delivered from the travails of the journey; don't ever feel depressed. These two and their infallible (Masoom) father will not forget you. These two came here on the advice of their respective parents for, without doubt, they help their friends and lovers in this world. These two came here just to see you and feel satisfied. Listen, Janabe Zaynab sends you her salaam and says she can never forget your walking to her brother Husain's tomb (Rauza), and weeping on his tragedy and your hunger and thirst during your travel to Karbala." After hearing this, I could only say, "*Aleika wa alaiha salaam*" – "Salutation to you and blessing."

I inquired with Habib ibne Mazahir the reason for Hazrat Abbas and J Ali Akbar being clad in a martial dress. With tears in

his eyes Habib ibne Mazahir told me that in Karbala these two could not fight to their fill. They wished to dispatch the enemy force to hell but divine decision was otherwise. They yielded before divine will but their desire stuck in their hearts; this dress would be removed when Imame Hujjat will appear and take revenge for the blood of Imam Husain.

I noticed that on their departure my room again became small. Hadi and I were left alone. I told Hadi I would never revisit my family for they had disappointed me. Whatever they do in my name is just for show. A visit would only increase my depression. I should be content with what I have. I hoped to face all dangers without harm due to the royal kindness of my two august visitors.

Hadi said, "Now you don't need anything. First three stages are easy for you. The deeds during the three stages are related to the three stages of growth in the world. The first stage comprises from the time of birth to three years of age. The second stage is spread over three to fifteen years of age during which a person is free from religious duties. The third stage, age fifteen to eighteen years, though the religious duties are ample, yet the intellect is incomplete. It is with the movement of intellect towards maturity that human deeds are reckoned. Allah commented after creating the intellect '*beak a-aa, ibu wa beak aseebu*' which implies that rewards and chastisement go along the maturity of intellect. In some cases intellect matures at eighteen years in others it may not even mature after a hundred years, so there is no tradition limiting the maturity to after 18 years age."

The three stages of the other world correspond to three stages of physical growth in the human world. So the three stages of my journey would be free from danger. So Hadi would not accompany me during these three stages. So he would leave me to meet me at the fourth stage where he would arrive before me.

I embraced him and told him that without his company I would be worried even though the way would be straight and free from dangers. I reminded him of the Prophet's motto, '*Alrafeeq*

summa attariq ('First have a companion then take to the road') which guided me not to leave the companion before the start of the journey. Hadi advised me to travel through the three stages alone for in the human world also I did not have my companion at those stages. He told me that he accompanied me since the time my intellect became matured because of his nature of *illieen* (the high ones). And being of that nature only meant to guide and indicate the right path. Whatever happened through those three stages it was the result of my own deeds. The Quran says: "*Fa lam nafsaka waala talumni*" – "*Blame yourself, not me.*" Then he left me. I pondered on what Hadi told me and realized its truth.

I was all alone and had to traverse three stages. I recalled the Quran: "*Natulllaahil lati lan tajeda li sunnatillaahi tabdila*" - "*this is the way of Allah, in which you find no change.*" The happenings in the human world and the everlasting world are intertwined; they cannot be changed. We have seen the human world, and we have to face the everlasting worlds without any questionings.

Chapter 3: Journey to First Stage

I took up the sack of my worldly deeds and took the way Hadi had pointed out to me. The way was all clear and fine cool wind was blowing. I was fresh and hoped to meet Hadi at the fourth stage. I walked fast thinking that my destination was not far. Around noon, I felt a bit tired, the wind had become warm and I felt thirsty. The passage narrowed and some thorns became visible before me. Avoiding them I arrived in the lap of a valley. I stared climbing the ascent before me. Afraid of my loneliness I looked behind and found some one walking behind me. I felt happy that there was at least companion. He finally reached me.

I saw that he was an ugly person, with marks of pain instead of a smile on his lips, with large teeth and upper lip rather sagging down. He saluted me, but said only '*Assalaamo Alayk*' instead of '*Assalaamo Alaykum*'. This made me suspicious of him because I realized he had omitted (*meem*) from the *salaam* (salutations) intentionally which is indicative of enmity. So I simply replied '*Wa Aalayika*'- ('*On you also*'). On my inquiry about his destination he told me that he was with me. I was already apprehensive so I didn't want his company. I asked his name. He told me he was my *hamzad* called ignorance.⁸ His title was Zigzaggy, nickname Abulhaul and his job was to spread riots and misguidance. I disliked all the information given by him and thought that loneliness would be better than such a companion.

I asked him if he knew which lane to take if a branch of two lanes appeared before us. He replied in the negative.

I told him that I was thirsty and wanted to have water. Did he know where to get some water? He replied that he did not know. I then asked him if the destination was near or far. He again

⁸ According to a tradition, Satan was granted a wish at the time of his expulsion that a child would be borne to him with every child borne to human being and Satan's child would constantly accompany the human child and as such is called Hamzad. Hamzad's job is to deceive his human companion in this as well as in *Barzakh*. If Hamzad's activities are overcome in this world he would be under control in the world hereafter.

replied that he did not know. I told him that a man had intellect so why he did not know anything.

He replied that he only knew that he had clung to him since his birth and never separated from him until God enabled him to get rid of me.

I thought this fellow is that cursed Satan who persuaded me to sin in the human world. Now this enemy has overtaken me here. God help me. The fellow continued walking two steps behind me. The way was tough while the ascent was steep.

I reached the top of the mountain and sat down for some rest. In the meantime that ignorance personified reached me and said, "It appears you are very tired. If you like, I may tell you of a shortcut, which will be one fifth of the actual distance."

I said, "It appears that despite your ignorance you can work miracles."

He said, "No such matter. Come here and see that the way we have taken is twisted like a bow. Though it is bright and clear it is five miles long. The distance that connects the two ends of this bow is only one mile. Under the principles of geometry the short cut is only one mile. It is wisdom to take the short cut."

I said, "A highway is always made due to large travelers moving on it. Are all those foolish who traverse the highway?"

He said, "You are idiot, the way shown by me is short. May be those who traveled (the longer highway) on it had plenty of food and drink with them and perhaps some carriage which could not move on the short cut. Why shouldn't we two take the shorter route?"

I was taken in by his talk and thought of him as a well wisher and leaving the clear highway entered the narrow mountain pass. The way was nowhere even. It had big pitfalls of rubble and thorns. There were a variety of snakes and scorpions. Hardly could we cross one ditch than we faced another faced. The air was very

hot and my tongue hung out due to thirst. My feet were bruised and the heart trembled with fear. O! God, what plight I am in? My Hamzad was laughing loudly all the while and making fun of me. After walking ten miles, I touched the highway again. I faced numerous problems and was exhausted. I hated the cursed Hamzad. I wished there was a world of distance between him and me. But he came and stood a little away from me. I continued sitting and he was standing. At last I got up and restarted on my way. He also followed me.

I observed a patch of green land a little ahead of me. My co-born ignorance again attacked me. Coming near me he pointed to the patch of green land and advised me to accompany him there to get water. I accompanied him because I was very thirsty and thought of the possibility of water in the greenery. The way to the greenery was highly uneven. When we reached there we found there was no water and it was a rocky plateau with a large number of black snakes writhing in it. The greenery on that land consisted of wild growth of shrubs. There, the wild shrubs are evergreen and crop up anywhere and everywhere. After a lot of difficulty I returned disappointed to the highway. We reached level ground and we saw a field of large watermelons. My Hamzad (Ignorance) at once nicked up one and started to eat. He invited me to partake but I refused for it was the property of an unknown person, and eating it without owner's permission is forbidden.

My Hamzad continued eating as the water from the melon flowed down his beard and chest. He said, "In the first place, these watermelons appear to be self-growing and wild; in the second place, even if someone owns them we are travelers and are authorized to take these according to our need. Then there is a saying that if you are about to die with hunger and in such a situation even eating a carcass is permitted as stated in Quran, '*Faman azturra gheira baaghin fa laa isma aleihi inallaaha ghafoorur raheem.*' (2:173) Finally, this is not the human world but Barzakh, and rules laid down by the religion are applicable to

the worldly affairs. You are a strange religious people who sometime follow orders which are not promulgated by Allah.”

I again was taken in by his arguments, the idiot that I was, accepting his arguments as common sense. I thought that his arguments were convincing. I also picked up one watermelon and had a bite. It was bitter like poison. It bruised my mouth and food pipe. I threw it away. I said that the fruit was satanic and symbolic of Abu Jahl, ignorance personified. He said it might be bad, so I picked another. This and a third also proved bitter like poison. He went on eating and praising the sweetness. I took a slice from him; it was also bitter like poison. I threw it away and wondered how he relished it. He said they suited him as he was satanic and did not suit me as I was human. (This reminded me of the lengthy arguments in philosophy that things are good or bad according to the nature of individuals. The evil do not regard even sins as evil while the virtuous always shun evil deeds.)

Suddenly a ferocious dog attacked us; and a man with a staff in hand followed it and hurled abuses and curses on us. Co-born Satan (my Hamzad) reached the highway with a jump and I was stranded there. The dog overtook me. I fell down in fear and the man beat me thoroughly with his staff. I protested, but he did not stop. I was bruised all over and fell bleeding on the highway. I cried and wailed for Hadi who had left me. My Hamzad was happy at his success. Seeing me in trouble, he sat away laughing loudly. He taunted me for having called Hadi who would be no use, according to Sayahak,⁹ in that condition. He commented that I had the seeds of all my troubles in the world of human beings on earth, *“Innad dunya mazraul aakhirata wal aakhirata yaumal hisaad.”* - (*“Human world is the farm of the Day of Judgment and this day is the day of reaping of that crop.”*) He taunted me for my claim of religious scholarship while I did not remember the Quranic verse (99:8): *“Wa manyaamal misqaala zarratin*

⁹ From this point the author calls the co-born as Sayahak. Hitherto he would be called by this name. *Translator*

sharanyaran" – "He who does the tiniest evil shall find it on the Day of Judgment." How can Hadi help a sinner in the light of the Quran and its convincing arguments? The stages would come where Hadi would be with me, but Sayahak would also cling to me. If I was entangled in troubles, Hadi would be no help according to Sayahak. I was reminded that Hadi would desert me at the times I sinned. Sayahak reminded of the Prophet's saying "*Laa yaznīl mōminu wa huwa mōminu*" – "A believer, if he is a true believer does not commit adultery."¹⁰ Hadi was never with me at moments of evil deed. How could he be with me now? I realized that Sayahak was well informed. I took out an apple from my sack and ate it. It quenched my thirst. My bruises were also healed, so I restarted on my way.

I reached a point where the highway branched into two. One way led to a bright pleasant city, the other to a ruined place. A person stood on duty there. I said to him, "Bother, that Sayahak who is following me has tortured me a lot today so please stop him from following me." The person on duty replied that, "Just as the shadow of a person does not leave him; he will follow you in the same way. But he will not be with you over here for he cannot enter the bright, blessed city. These Sayahaks will pass the night in the ruins on your left, and he will again accompany you when you restart your journey. It is likely that he may not trouble you much."

I entered the city. This was my first stage. The buildings were grand with canals all over. There were lawns with lush greenery, trees were laden with fruit. There were well mannered and nicely

¹⁰ In the light of the hadith of *Masoomin*, it is known that the soul of faith (*rooh-e-imaan*) is not transferred with death; at moments of sin it disappears and when a person asks for forgiveness (*Tauba*) it returns. This happens because the soul of faith is divine and it deserts a believer at the moments of evil deeds. He indulges in sin in the darkness of ignorance. May God provide all men the opportunity of forgiveness (*Tauba*)... *amen*.

speaking attendants. There were pure drinks and clean foods. I felt so pleased that I forgot all past troubles.

This place was so fine compared to the sufferings that I had gone through that but for the desire to meet Hadi, I wouldn't want to leave this place.

Here I met some of my disciples, who had died before me. We took rest during the night. The morning was fragrant with the sweet smell of oranges. We walked around leisurely and inquired about each other's well being. We shared whatever had happened to us. Only in such stages of our journey we could have the time to exchange information otherwise everyone is so busy during the other stages of the journey. The Quran says: *"Li kulli amran yauminin shaanuu ughnihi."* – *"On the Day of Judgment every one shall be self centered"*. We were thankful that we got rid of the Sayahaks. We thanked God to bless us with all these comforts in reward for ordinary good deeds in the human world. As the Quran (37:61) advises, *"For these comforts people should do good in the human world."*

Chapter 4: Journey to Next Three Stages

Second Stage

Now the siren rang with the call to *hayya ala khairil amal*. This indicated the time to set out for the next stage. We picked up our luggage and sacks and started to move. Soon we reached a place where the road diverged into two. We saw the dark cloud of Sayahaks moving towards us.

I asked the duty officer whether we could be free of the pursuit of the Sayahaks after us. He said, "These are your animal selves, like tyranny, pride, sexual excess, and wrath, etc. They cannot leave you. But they are of various types some totally dark, black and white, or entirely white. They are named accordingly: *ammaara*, *lawwaama*, *mutmainna* etc. If anyone's Sayahak is white and *mutmainna*, he is very useful. Sometimes, such a Sayahak is considered superior to angles. *Mutmainna* is in fact, a blessing and gift of God which you turned to curse through your evil deed."

Whatever you sowed in the material world will be reaped by you here. As you sow so you reap. Remember the divine announcement, "*Do you grow the corn, or we; for we are the Lord.*" (Quran 56:64)

At this point the Sayahaks approached us, and each of us accompanied our Sayahak to our destination. But now our mutual company was broken; some were left behind with their Sayahak, some walked side by side while I moved along with my Sayahak. We reached a mountain, with a narrow pass ahead. But the whole area was rocky and I thought of climbing up for the air as the pass below was warm and suffocating. My Sayahak came and supported my idea of climbing up, telling me that the pass was not only hot and suffocating but infesting with wild beasts likely to harm us. Moreover, the hill top would be pleasant and would enable me to have a comprehensive look around.

As in the human world I used to speak aloud to impress people and was always desirous of higher status. So I decided to take up the way up in the mountain. I could not find the way to go up so I have to walk along side where the passage was not even. Often the earth would slip from under my feet and I fell once or twice. If I had not grasped the thorny bushes I would have fallen into the mountain pass. I remained safe, but in the process my hands, feet and sides of the body were wounded. Once, as I fell my nose struck against a stone and the nasal bone broke and blood started coming out of the wound.¹¹

I told my Sayahak that walking up the mountain was very troublesome. Going through the pass would have been better. He looked at me in amusement and said, "*Manastakbaraa waza'hul laahu wa manas thaa'laa raghmal laahu anfahu*" – "He who acts proudly Allah brings him down and he who acts haughtily Allah breaks his nose." I am surprised that you read all this but didn't act accordingly. "*Zuq innaka anta azizul karim*"¹² – "Taste the divine chastisement for you called yourself azizul karim". The Sayahak went on taunting me and continued walking till the mountain path, full of troubles, ended and clean and clear way appeared. Now my entire body was bruised and I was feeling very bad.

As I looked back I saw those walking along slipping and falling into the depths of the pass. I heard their wailing and moaning, and their Sayahaks laugh merrily at their discomfiture.

Finally we gained a smooth way. I had no problem walking now, but I was exhausted with my efforts to avoid falling into the

¹¹ The breaking of the nose is symbolic with the shattering of pride. The person who is proud in the world Allah will shatter his pride in the world after

¹² This significance is reinforced by the citation from the Quran that the Shayahak makes. In the second Quranic quotation there is a reference to Abu Jahal, who was very proud of his social status and considered his charity great. He always called himself *Azizul Karim* – i.e., respectable and giver in charity. So Allah tells him in this verse that he, the self-styled *Azizul Karim* must taste divine chastisement on the Day of Judgment.

hot mountain pass. My wounds hurt and I felt great thirst. My Sayahak tried in vain to misguide me into some trouble but I ignored him. Occasionally, I felt like yielding to his persuasions, but I had firmly resolved not to pay attention to him. As he realized my determination to ignore him, he stayed behind and I entered an orchard. The way went into the centre of this orchard where I saw a pool of water with some people on its brink with a variety of dry fruit beside them. Seeing me they stood up in my honor and invited me to sit with them and partake of the fruit. I asked them who they were and what was the fruit beside them. They told me that when they died they were fasting and the fruit was for the breakfast (*iftaar*) sent by the merciful and beneficent Allah. They said, "You may also eat this fruit; even though when you died you were not fasting. But you often provided breakfast (*iftaar*) to those who were fasting. So your eating this fruit of *iftaar* is okay." I sat down with them and ate some fruit. My thirst ended and all the hurt and pain disappeared.

Now they inquired about my journey. I said that Allah be praised for what was destined ended according to His Will. I told them that meeting them has put a stop to my discomfitures. But my companions are entangled in the mischief of their Sayahaks. Mine also tried to entangle me into trouble but I ignored him and he stayed back. I hope he would not overtake me now." They smiled and said, "*It is not like this. In this garden they can only use the weapon of falsity and treachery, but as we move out of here, they may take some short cut and overtake us and try to destroy us.*"

I asked how we would fight them without weapons. They said, "If you defeated your ego in the human world you developed a weapon in this way which would reach you here in time of need." In the Quran it is said "*Arrange whatever is possible for you against Allah's enemy and your enemy, such as horses and weapons and material in order that they are afraid of you.*" (8:60) I told them that I always thought this verse as referring to

preparation for a holy war (i.e. *jihad*). They said, "The orders and rules of Quran apply in all worlds. They don't terminate with the human world. If it ended with the human world Quran would have been defective for it is the final heavenly book and it was revealed to the last of the prophets."

The Third Stage

We got up and set out for our third stage. The way was fine and pleasant. It was an avenue with fruit laden trees on either side. The air was pleasantly cool and a canal of sweet water ran parallel to the road.

The way did not offer any problem. The time passed so well that one did not feel any tiredness or boredom. Soon a stage became visible. It was probably the third stage. Each one of us had a separate place to himself. The bricks were solid gold and silver. We stayed in our palaces.

These buildings were fully equipped with materials for comfort and we wanted nothing more. Our eyes were dazzled by the beauty of utensils, the decoration of carpets and walls. The attendants were handsome, well-mannered, well-dressed and soft-spoken and always willing to serve. They appeared to be the picture of what has been stated in Quran: *"Handsome attendants will be all around them as if they were scattered pearls and you will see for them the bounties of paradise and a grand kingdom."* (56:17-19)

I felt embarrassed at receiving their service. Suddenly I glanced at a large mirror and observed the high status that Allah had granted me out of His bounty. I felt elated and sat reclining on a pillow.

The night arrived and the building was lighted by luminous light coming out of the branches of trees. Thousands of electric lamps would be dim against this luminous brightness. I was wondering at this light when a voice was heard saying:

"God is the light of the heaven and the earth. The semblance of His light is that of a niche in which is a lamp, the flame within a glass, the glass a glittering star as it were, lit with the oil of a blessed tree, the olive, neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil appears to light up even though fire touches it not,--light upon light. God guides to His light whom He will. So God advance percept of wisdom for men, for God has knowledge of every thing." (Quran 24:35)

On hearing this I understood that this luminous light was from the family tree of Muhammad and his progeny. This city was the city of *muwadaat*; the love and adherence to the pious infallibles. Those who have extreme love for the Prophet and his progeny stay in this city. The residents here are busy with the talk of Muhammad and *darood wa salaam* on him. We stayed in perfect comfort there, our hearts flowing with thankfulness for Allah, his Prophet and Ahlul Bayt. The gate to the city had large letters to the effect "*Hubbu alium hasanatum laa yazurru maasiatum*" – "*Affection of Ali is the virtue along with which no sin can hurt a person*".¹³

¹³ This implies that if you are a devotee of Imam Ali you cannot commit any sin. The love of Imam Ali acts as a shield to prevent one from engaging in a sin.

Chapter 5: Fourth Stage -- Meeting Hadi

With the dawn we set out for the next stage. The way was clear and smooth, with trees lining either side of the road and canals moving. There were flowers and the air was fragrant and cool. There are no words to describe the fineness of the passage. As we left the city we realized that its bounties accompanied us till now.

Now the way was not clear or smooth, but was narrow and rocky. It was a crooked and passed through a mountain.

We could lose our way if we were not together. On one left turn the way branched into several passages. It was difficult to decide which way to take. Suddenly we saw our (co-born) Sayahaks appear as if from nowhere. As I saw my Sayahak, my heart filled with pain and sorrow; and as my vision was disturbed, my foot struck against a stone and was bruised. Now I limped with great difficulty. All my companions were walking fast and I was left behind. My Sayahak walked by my left side. Now we faced a bifurcation in the road. I wondered which way to take when the Sayahak came near and told me to take the bifurcation on the left. He walked a few steps to persuade me to take the way. But I stayed back and took the other way. I could not possibly take both and be one traveler.

The Sayahak insisted a lot, but I did not pay heed to him. I had already suffered a lot following his suggestions, so I thought of the old saying 'to try the tried one is folly.'

Soon we emerged out of the mountain pass on to a clean and even path. In a distance the marks of a garden and tall trees were visible. I realized that it was the fourth stop where Hadi had promised to meet me. In my desire to meet Hadi, I almost ran towards the place. Despairing of me, the Sayahak stayed back. I saw Hadi at the gate of the city as per his promise. I saluted him and ran to embrace him. I felt relieved. I entered the city hand in hand with Hadi. He took me to a palace especially built for me. It

was equipped with whatever one would need. I rested for some time. I took some repast. When I appeared fresh, Hadi inquired about my journey up to there. I said, "Million of thanks to Allah, who showers His blessings on His sinful creatures despite their transgressions, I traveled without any trouble worth mentioning. Whatever I suffered was due to my faults; if you were there, it would be better for me. The Sayahak troubled me because you were not there to guide me. Finally I've reached you safe. Your happy company has removed the memory of past travails."

Hadi replied that due to his absence I fell into Sayahak's traps; but even in his company I would not have been fully safe from the Sayahak's tricks. He added that he was just a guide to warn me against Sayahak's mischief. However, the Sayahak was well equipped to misguide me. I would have been perished had I yielded to the Sayahak's tricks. Hadi warned me that his job was over and I have only a staff and a shield for my protection which is insufficient. He said that today being Friday I should visit my family to see if they have arranged something for my further journey. Moreover, I had not visited them since long.¹⁴

I said, "Hadi, you know that I have despaired of my relations, for they are all self-centered and the dead departed are soon forgotten. I visited them last just a week after my death and they had completely obliterated my memory. I have no hopes of them."

Hadi said, "You must visit them today; perhaps they have not forgotten the saying of the Holy Prophet "Remember your dead ones with goodness and fine words." Perhaps your visit may remind them of you. If you have despaired of your people, don't despair of Allah. Remember the verse of Quran: "*La taqnatu min rahmatillahi, inna rahmatallahi qareeb.*"--Don't despair of Allah's blessing: divine blessing is at hand. Hadi insisted that I should go today. Perhaps my visiting them would make me rekindle my

¹⁴ Sometime the spirits are allowed to visit their relations.

memory in their hearts as they must have heard the Prophet's saying that one should remember one's dead with nice words.

On Hadi's insistence I visited my home. I noticed that the prestige of my home had gone; the door was locked; there was no source of income and the children were neglected. I prayed to the Lord to take pity on my family in their moment of dire need. Immediately after my prayer my poor family remembered me and the comfortable life they led in my time. They started to cry and prayed for the peace of my soul and blessed me.

I returned to my place and found Hadi standing by the side of a fine pedigree horse saddled with beautiful golden cloth having a golden rein. On my inquiring Hadi about the horse he told me that it was sent to me by my family as a result of divine blessing. The onward journey would be very difficult on foot and the horse would be useful. He also told me that my prayer for my family was accepted and they would live in comfort in future. He also told me that people in the world are ignorant of the utility of praying for each other. According to a saying of the Prophet three days of ignorance of each other's well-being breaks the brotherly ties between believers.

I entered my room and noticed that a very beautiful *Hourie* was sitting on the wooden seat. The luminousness of her face brightened the whole room. Hadi told me that the *Hourie* was wed to me, and she was sent for me tonight from the holy Valley of Peace (*Wadius Salaam*). Hadi left the room and we two were left alone there. As I went near her, she stood up in my honor and kissed my hands. We sat side by side. I passed the night in that comfortable room.

Chapter 6: Journey with Hadi

Hadi came back in the morning; now we had to set out for the next stage. I got ready; I mounted the horse, staff in hand and the shield on my back. Hadi brought the travel permit as it was necessary for the next stage. We moved out of the celestial city and reached a place with sandy land full of mud and marsh. I observed animals like monkeys, but these were humans with monkey-like faces. Their bodies were hairless and they walked on two legs. They had no tails and the blood and pus were oozing out of their genitals that were highly stinking.

I asked Hadi about the place and the strange beings. He told me it was the land of sexual desire and the people were adulterers. *"I warn you not to lose your way for that would mean sure death and destruction,"* he said.

In fear I held the horse's rein tightly lest he should go astray. Though the way was straight, it was very muddy and marshy and often the horse sank in up to its knees. I thought the horse was a great help, and may God bless my family for sending me this gift. I realized the wisdom of the *Hadith* which says marriage and rearing a family is vital half of faith.

We saw some animal-like people stuck with nails on crucifixes and their genitals were also nailed with iron to the board. Some were being beaten with iron rods; and they were barking like dogs in pain. Those punishing them replied on their howling *"akhsau feeha wa la takallamun"* – *"get lost and don't talk."* Here was a living picture of the verse from Quran: *"And if you could only see when the criminals will hold their heads low saying 'Our Lord! We have seen and we have heard: So, now send us back (again to the world): That we will work righteousness, verily, we believe now with (all the) certainty.'"* (32:12). It was evident these were violators of the divine code and indulgers in illegitimate sex.

Suddenly the Sayahaks appeared as if from nowhere. They virtually attacked some of the people. They tried to disturb some

horses. Others invited travelers away from the straight path. I observed that the land beside the path was so hard that even horses' hooves left no mark on it. But I followed Hadi's guidance, held tight to the reins and rode straight. I was not bothered about the mud or marsh; my only thought was to ride straight and not go astray. In walking straight was deliverance.

I saw that those who were misled by their Sayahaks from the straight path were stuck up to their necks in earth, mud and sand and their delivery appeared impossible. Some managed to wriggle out, but the heat of the mud led their flesh to peel and fall down. The mud seemed like liquid tar coal.

I became so frightened that I held my horse's rein more tightly. I thanked Allah for saving me from the sins in my earthly life. I heard others thanking Allah loudly for saving them from sin. I told Hadi that the Prophet said that if you saw someone in trouble; thank Allah silently for saving you from the same. If you say loudly it would give further pain to the one suffering.

Hadi told me that this applied to the earthly world. In the world of purgatory, there is the matter of reward and chastisement so thank loudly here so that sinners suffer more. Thus the transgressors would realize their sin, their blindness be changed to sight, dream with awakening. Thus they would realize that the earthly world is darkness and this hereafter is real life, as the Quran (29:64) makes it clear. So I thanked God loudly.

I noticed that the sinners suffered more on my loud thanks to Allah. The land beneath them turned stony, strong winds started blowing and it grew dark. Stone pebbles fell from the sky like hail. On reaching the ground these pebbles entered like nails into the ground. I trembled at the sight.

I asked Hadi about the land and the people being punished. They were being punished severely as the stones were raining on them heavily. Hadi was flying above my head and his whole body expressed fear of all powerful Allah. He told me that this was also

the land of unnatural sexual desire and those under punishment were sodomy indulgers (men to men sexual actors). Hadi advised me to leave fast lest we should also suffer chastisement.

He quoted the saying "*Araazi befe'li au addaakhilu fihim wa lam yakhruj fahuwa ma'hum*" – "*He who is pleased with the acts of a people, or remain among them and does not go out, will suffer their fate and participate in their destiny.*"

I asked Hadi whether the mud and marsh was actually the matter of man's libido which had taken that form there. Hadi said, "*Yes, but you have no alternative but to move faster. Cover your hand with your shield to save yourself from the stone and whip your horse so that with God's enablement you may leave here quickly. Remember the verse from the Quran (4:97): 'Was Allah's earth not vast enough for you to migrate somewhere else to worship him?'*" After a little distance we were out of that accursed land.

I whipped the horse and struck my heels in its sides. The horse shook a bit out of lethargy and ran fast, galloping with the wind. Hadi, who was flying over head like an eagle, was left behind. Like the exemplification of verse from the Quran (57:21) I flew on my galloping horse, "*Race with one another to be the foremost in seeking forgiveness from your Lord and the Garden whose width is the width of heaven and earth prepared for those who believe in Allah and his Messengers.*"

My Sayahak suddenly reached me; my horse was disturbed and I fell down. I was badly hurt and my horse lost its balance and its front legs reached the side of the road. The horse sank into the marsh. It was with great difficult that it extracted itself from the marsh. Hadi arrived and massaged my body; the broken bones were reconnected. He placed me over the horse and holding its reins started leading us ahead. After a few steps we were out of that land of calamity. I complained to Hadi that during his absence the Sayahak appears and troubles me. Hadi replied that he left me often to face the Sayahak who was the outcome of my misdeeds.

Now there was another land of sexual deprivation ahead. We entered it. The people here were gluttons. Those on the right looked like donkeys, cows and other cattle. These gluttons ate their own earnings so their chastisement was comparatively lighter. But those on the left appeared like swine and bears and their pouches were bulging out a lot. They did not mind the permitted and the prohibited (*halal* and *haram*) and indiscriminately gulped their earnings and the earnings of others. Their limbs were thin and faces were disfigured. They were being chastised. Their bellies were full of fire. In the words of the Quran: *"They are like cattle. No (even) more lost: Because they are careless (of warning)."* (7:179)

We crossed this land rather fast and reached another stop. There was an inn there, within a waste plateau. Nothing grew here, but the travelers to the end take a little rest here and eat from their travel provision.

My whole body ached due to the fall from the horse. Hadi took the sack from my back and took out a little box from it which contained some medicine. He massaged the medicine all over my body, which ended my pain. I asked Hadi about the medicine. He told me it was my inner praise of Allah. I praised the Lord whenever He blessed me with anything in the human world. Praise of the lord is efficacious against all pains in the human world as well as in the other world. Allah says *"In hadithil qudsi, 'Hamadani 'abdi wa 'alima inna'a matil lati min 'indi wa innal balayal lati andaf'afatu anhu fabitatauli ashahdu kum fainni azzayyafu lahu ila n'amaddunya n'emal aakhiraa wa adf'au anhu balayal aakhirata kama raf'atu anhu balayad dunya" – "Bondsman praised and thanked me realizing that he gets the blessings from me. He believes that the troubles left him due to my intercession. O my angels bear witness that I shall increase his blessings in both the worlds and remove his troubles in the other world as I did in the human world."*

Chapter 7: Going to the Place of Pleasure

We passed the night here. Before the restart of the journey I was told that before nightfall we should be out of this land of Excessive Desire but next we would witness the chastisement of sinners of the tongue. On the first day, we witnessed the chastisement of sinners of sexuality, but the chastisement of today would be no less severe. This land would be barren and waterless. It would be better to carry enough store of water over the horse. "Walk more and carry the shield over head for that would be better," I was told. I was also told that the shield was in return for my keeping fast in the world. "You remained hungry and thirsty for Allah's pleasure; this saved your entire being from Allah's disobedience. *"Fa innasaumu jannatun min-naari kama innahu wahaai."* "Fasting saves you from hellfire like a protective shield."

We set out, the Sayahak again appeared. "Get away, you cursed being," I said. The Sayahak replied, "Why don't you move away from me."

I moved a few steps away from him and continued traveling with Hadi. The Sayahak also walked on my left side along with us.

On either side of the way there were animals of various types, such as dogs, wolves, foxes, monkeys, rats, snakes, scorpions, sheep, etc. Some animal were yellow, some blue; animals of all sorts and all colors. These animals were fighting, attacking each other, tearing and eating each other. They bit each other when they got an opportunity. The ears and mouths of some of them emitted fire. Mirages appeared at certain points, inviting these animals in search of water; but not finding water they returned disappointed. Some of these were eating caresses. Some fell in deep wells. As they fell, smoke, sparks and flames came out of the wells. Hadi told me that these wells were meant for those who made fun of other believers by words or by signs of twisted lips – such fellows had to stay here. This was according to

the divine verse; "*Waliun likulli hamazatin lamatin*" "Woe unto cavilers and those who taunt." (104:1) The eaters of carcasses were those who had been talking ill of others at their back. And fire emitted from the ears of those who had been hearing this back hitting. Those tearing and eating each other were people who abused each other, accused and indulged in accusations. The yellow faced and two-tongue fellows were those who looked for fault in others, liars and flatterers.

There was hot air in the land; I often asked Hadi for water, which he gave to me sometimes. I was told that the way was long and my store of water was short and I had to use it sparingly. I was told that I deserved only a little water as in my earthly life I was not very pious and God-fearing. Here, one got water in proportion to one's *taqwa* (piety) in earthly life. Hadi reminded me of the words from Quran: "*Qad aflahal mominoon, hum fi salatihim khaashiyun wallazinaa hum anal laghvi marizoon.*" – "Successful! Indeed must be the believers! Those who make themselves humble in their prayers; and those who avoid useless talk..." (23:1-3) I was guilty of insincerity or lack of *Khushoo*¹⁵ during prayers and did not avoid improprieties. I reaped what I sowed. "*Faman yamal misqaala zarratin kheiran yara wa man yamal misqala zaratin sharran yara*" – "If one did an iota of good, one would see it; if one did an iota of evil, one would see it." (99:7-8)

Hadi diverted my attention to a particular sight. I saw that in the distant horizon, darkness and brightness were intermingled with flames. On careful observation I noted that a lush green orchard with fruit laden trees was afire. I was told that the orchard was meant for believers, who were virtuous, but when they indulged in back biting, accusation, and lying about other

¹⁵ *Khushoo* is Arabic word which means fear, the fear of Allah, and man should be guided by this sentiment at all prayers in order to avoid the charge of insincerity in his religious performance.

believers the orchards caught fire, and was consumed by fire. In other words, sins consumed virtuous deeds. If their faith was constant, they would not see the fire born of evil deeds to consume their fruit laden trees of virtue. When such people arrive here and learn the facts, they shall feel sorry for their misdeeds. That is why prophets constantly warned us in the world about the fruit of our faith and of virtuous deeds, for on earth we are unaware of the consequences of our deeds.¹⁶ The Quran also talks, in the very beginning of *taqwa* and faith on the occult as interrelated. "*Hudallil mutaqinal lazeena yuminoona bilgheib wa yuqimoonas salaata*" – "*This Qur'an guides those believers who are marked by taqwa, those who believe in the Invisible and establish prayer.*" (2:2-3)

As we reached the burnt orchards, we met with some cool wind. The wind removed the ashes and the lush green orchards with fruit laden trees came in sight again. Canals flowed and sweet singing birds appeared. This meant that the believers did some acts of virtue, or asked for forgiveness. If people on earth knew about the burning up of their orchards, they would feel the greatest disappointment.

Hadi told me that it was the first tract of the Valley of Peace (*Wadius Salaam*). There was peace and tranquility there. I was advised to tie the staff and shield by the side of the horse's seat, and let the horse graze in the garden. This was in order to have the horse refreshed and ready for the next lap of our journey.

Hadi told me that I had ten days to replenish my strength and capacity. The way ahead was infested with thieves, sharpers and robbers whom I could scarce fight. I was advised to visit my family on Friday so that some possible gift from them could be useful in my journey ahead.

¹⁶ The Prophet once remarked to his companions that each time the *Kalima* was recited a tree sprouted in the Paradise. One companion remarked that we had already planted a number of trees as a result of these recitations. The Prophet informed them that these trees would remain as long as these were not destroyed by committing sins.

I started to wonder whether there were thieves and robbers in the Valley of Peace: I thought Hadi was no more trustworthy and started to cry.

Hadi assured me that his help was still available but it depended on my foresight. He told me that the way to Valley of Peace passed by the Valley of Barhoot, which would be the scene of various chastisements. "Your minor slip would fell you into that valley, where your Sayahak would continuously misguide you," Hadi said to me. "And you'll have to pass two months there," he added.

I realized that it was the test befitting doomsday, and doomsday was still far off. Hadi reminded me that it was all the shadow of the doomsday. I was advised to look at the journey as the rehearsal for the bridge of trials (*Pule Siraat*). I had to go through this worrisome journey and wisdom required that I made some arrangement in advance.

So I visited my earthly home on Friday evening. I found that my wife had remarried and she was busy pleasing her second husband and the children had all been scattered. They were also married and engaged in their chores. I sat over a bough which was branching out in two. Finally in disappointment I perched on a wall in the lane. I found everyone busy with their own worldly lives. I wished they cared for the hereafter. They were involved in the affairs of their children. I was reminded of a *Hadith* of the Prophet "*Halakar rajul fi aakhiriz zamaan; wa in lam takum zaujatun fabi yaddi agrubaaihi wa aulaadihi*" – "*Men of the last epoch would be destroyed by their wives; if not by wives, then by relatives and children*".

I was thus lost in thought when I by chance, I glanced towards the upper portion of my home. I saw my son with his wife, and my daughter with her husband. They were eating fruit and their children were near them. All were busy talking. One said, "The trees from which we get fruit were planted by the late Haaji Qochaani. Now he is under the earth and we are eating his fruit."

The other said, "O miserable, he will be enjoying the fruits in heaven." Another said, "You are right. The dear departed loved me so much. He gave me cash and always made me happy. May God bless him!" Another said, "Whenever I needed paper, book, or pen, he bought it for me from the market" A third said, "He was a mullha and wanted us all to become mullha." They all remembered me with good words. They decided that they should recite the Quran as it was Friday night; one of them recited *Sura Dahr* and another recited *Sura Dukhan*. I sat listening to their recitation till they gifted me the *Sawaab* of their recitation to my soul. I was filled with joy and blessed them for their virtues, and then I returned to my place.

Chapter 8: Last Stage – The Valley of Peace

Upon returning from my family I saw the horse ready for travel with Hadi loading a sack on the horse. I inquired about the travel sack to which Hadi told me that an angel brought it informing that it contained a gift. Janabe Zahra had sent it as a reward for the recitation of *Sura Dukhaan* for that *Sura* is associated with her. The second travel sack had the gift from Imam Ali for the reward of the recitation of *Sura Dhar*, which is associated with him.

The two holy beings had sent me instructions to take the way that is a little away from *Barhoot* so that I could safely reach the Valley of Peace, without encountering the hot winds of *Barhoot*.

I wanted to open the travel sack to see what gifts had arrived. Hadi told me there was no need for it would open out of its own accord when the need arose. We set out happily. I went ahead on my horse and Hadi behind me. Soon we reached the land of greed. I saw people there whose faces were disfigured like those of dogs. Some of these were fat and others were lean and thin. There were corpses scattered on the ground. When the dogs arrived to eat them, they started fighting and tearing each other. The fighters fell dead and the corpses remained as they were. The strong ones made the weak ones run away. But the strong ones started infighting and could not eat the corpses. It was a scene exemplifying "*Inad-duniya jeefatun wa taalubuha kilaab*" – "The world is like a corpse and the lovers of it are like dogs."

Some dogs ate the corpses, but smoke came out of their heads and backs. Observing this state of their kind, other dogs dared not come near them. Hadi told me that these were eaters of bribe and wealth of orphans. He said, "*Innal lazina yaakuloona amwaala yataama yakuloona fi butoonihim naara*" - "Those who eat the wealth of orphans eat fire in their bellies."¹⁷

¹⁷ A famous *Hadith* of the Prophet, with reliable reference relates that one day Imam Ali visited the Prophet in the company of Fatima Zahra and found him weeping profusely.

I asked Hadi whether we had reached *Barhoot* contrary to our decision. Hadi told me what we had seen was a replica of *Barhoot*, for we were safe from the hot air of that valley.

Leaving the land of greed we reached the land of jealousy. There were many factories here. Dark people, like Sayahaks were at work in those factories. The noise of the moving machines was extreme, and one could hear nothing due to the noise. The earth was trembling with the vibration of the machines. Heavy steel covered machines and their levers moved in the wilderness like giant steel covered cars. A very huge machine stopped just in front of a bus on the way, and my Sayahak also came flying like a cloud of smoke. I looked back but Hadi was nowhere to be seen. The Sayahak invited me to watch the fun of that mobile factory, the like of which I would not see on earth. I was tempted, but the suggestion came from the Sayahak who had caused me trouble

On enquiry they were told by the Prophet that during his ascension to heaven he was shown women of his people undergoing punishment. The Prophet said, "O Ali, I saw a woman undergoing harsh punishment: she was hanged by her breasts. I saw another who was eating her own flesh, with fire underneath her; I saw a third woman who was hanged by her tongue with boiling water being poured into her throat. I saw the fourth one, her feet tied up to her hands and snakes and scorpions were crawling all over her body. The sixth one was blind, deaf and dumb and was locked in a box of fire. Her melted brain was oozing out of her holes while her body was breaking up due to leprosy and leukoderma. I saw another woman hanging by her feet inside an oven of fire. Another woman was under torture as scissors of fire were trimming her flash. I saw another woman, her head like a pig, her body like an donkey, undergoing numerous tortures. Yet another woman I saw was having a dog-like face, fire entering her from behind and coming out her mouth. Angels were beating her with rods of fire." Fatima Zahra asked her father about the acts of these women on earth. The Prophet informed her daughter that the woman hanging by her breasts stopped her husband from coming to her bed; the one hanging by her feet was the one who left home without husband's permission. The one eating her own flesh used to decorate herself to show herself to people; the one with legs tied up to her hands never bothered about the filth and did not take a bath after menstruation and prayed in that filthy state. The one who was blind and deaf brought forth children after adultery and attributed these children to her husband. The one being cut with scissor of fire was always without *Hijab* before strangers. The woman with a pig's head and a donkey's body was a backbiter and a liar. The Prophet added that the woman who annoyed her husband would be cursed and the one who pleased her husband was lucky. The Prophet had seen all this in *Barzakh*, for doomsday was still far and its chastisement would be eternal.

earlier, so I did not pay heed to him. I put my horse in galloping speed saying "Qul auzu bi rabil falaq min sharri maa khalaq". I recited the whole Sura (113) from the Quran. Sayahak said: "Poor fellow; he recited it all his life on earth, and he should have acted on it but what can be done now? No use!"

I was terrified and the Sayahak disappeared by the side of that machine-motor. I thought he had disappeared and I wondered where Hadi had gone. Lo and behold, the Sayahak reappeared in the guise of a terrifying being. My horse got upset and lost the way, and fell down near the machine. I also fell and my limbs lost its sensation. Now I couldn't even get up. The machines that were far approached me. Flames were coming out of those machines, moving towards me. The machines wanted to swallow me and the Sayahak was laughing loudly at me. He taunted, "Yes, recite min sharri haasidin iza hasad...". Then he added, "O Fool, has ever an aalim got rid of jealousy? You escaped me for a few stages and hurt my heart and liver. Let me see how you escape me now."¹⁸ Saying this, he gripped me.

His knocking stirred my blood, and even though I was weak, I grappled with him. He was stronger and was about to overpower me when I cried out "Ya Ali! Madad!" – "Help me, O Ali." Upon my cry for help to Imam Ali ibne Abu Talib, all the machine that were about to crush me suddenly started to go back and in the confusion of retreat some struck against each other and were destroyed. The Sayahak who intended to run away was crushed under a huge machine. His bones were broken. I thought that how he was mocking at me and how he met a tragic end which he well deserved. As the old adage say "If you dig a pit for others you face a pit yourself." This was my last encounter with the Sayahak.

18 Ulemaa (Religious scholars) have an excess of jealousy, according to traditional belief of people on earth.

I managed to gain the highway which was the right path. Actually the Sayahak had upset my horse and as a result of this I strayed from the right path. After reaching the highway I fell down on the road, as I was much troubled by smoke, stink, and heat. I was very thirsty. Suddenly, I saw Hadi running towards me. He opened the travel sack gifted by Hazrat Ali and took out a clean crystal bottle the light of which illuminated the whole forest. The bottle contained pure and sweet water which was cold. As I drank it my thirst and body ache disappeared. My vigor returned and my internals purified as the Quran says, "*Innal abraara yashreboona kaasin man kaana mizajuha kaafoora.*" – "*The virtuous shall be offered a drink mixed with camphor*". (76:5)

I found my horse dead. So I carried my bag on my shoulder and Hadi carried the travel sacks and we two set out. The desert was as vast as the desert of Africa (Sahara). It was blackened and full of stink due to the factories. I noticed that the machines were turning out men of fire like cigars come out of machines.

Hadi told me that those who are jealous of believers suffer a bad fate in these machines for the expression of their jealousy by tongue and body language. *Fishaar* takes out the fire of their inner jealousy from their faces. Jealousy is like fire and consumes faith just as fire consumes dry wood. One of the Hadith says: "*Allasadu yaakulul imaan kama taakulu naarual hatab.*"

As it was rather dark Hadi led the walking in front. I told Hadi that in view of the recommendation made by Imam Ali about me I should not have faced any problem. Perhaps we were moving on a wrong path but as no man was totally free from jealousy, I had suffered due to the little jealousy I had in me. If Janabe Zahra's recommendation were not there I would have suffered like one of the sufferers in the land of jealousy. Hadi told me that the sufferers in that land would sooner or later be relieved of their chastisement and would join the blessed ones.

It was hot and stinking and with the heavy load on my back and on Hadi's we tried to walk fast to leave that cursed land as

soon as possible. I also feared that if the Sayahak were not dead he would appear again. My perspiration and odor had spread onto my dress; my calves were aching. We came out of that land with great difficulty. Soon we faced fine, cool gusts of wind and saw fresh springs of water. The hills and the passes were overgrown with lush green grass and plants. We sat down beside a spring to rest awhile.

I told Hadi that I thought my Sayahak was crushed to death under the machines. Hadi informed me that he could not perish though he dared not trouble me in that blessed land. He informed me that we were very far from the *Barhoot* valley and would soon reach the land of pride and hauteur. But I had no pride on earth; I would not see the suffering of the people in that area. We were not very far from the Valley of Peace and its sacred capital *Huma*.

As we proceeded it became more pleasant and enjoyable. We could see hills covered with fruit laden trees, waterfalls and in the lap of the vast mountain a large number of silk tents.

Chapter 9: HUMA in the Valley of Peace

Hadi told me that it was the city of *Huma* where people lived in tents. The pillars of these tents and their wedges were pure gold and the ropes were made of silver. After a while Hadi asked me to wait so that he could locate my tent. I asked Hadi about the name of the locality which was so pleasant. Hadi told me it was the valley of *Aman* and it was a sacred land. I had to stay there for a few days. He took out a purse-like object from my travel sack, in which there was a gift sent for me by Janabe Zahra. He turned his face towards a tent in the lap of the hillock and moved away from me. I saw Hadi take out of his pocket a piece of paper and read something aloud. In response to his loud call, the door of the tent opened, and all of a sudden a few handsome boys and pretty girls came out of it. They suddenly ran towards me, with Hadi following them.

Then he took out another purse from my travel sack and advised me to accompany those people to the tent, take some rest and wait for him there. He was going to have a round of the capital and return after arranging a place for my stay. I said, "Hadi, I'm a traveler here, with no friend or sympathizer. Where are you going?" He said, "I am going on your behalf. It is your city. Go to that tent; you won't be alone there. You have your friends and helpers there." He recited this verse from the Quran: "*Hurun maqsuraatun fil kheyaam lam yatmishunna insun wa laa jaan,*" – "*There will be beautiful houries in the tents untouched earlier by men or jinns.*" (55:72) Saying this Hadi flew away.

I accompanied them and entered the tent with honor and warm welcome. Inside I saw a *hourie* on a wooden seat who stood up respectfully to welcome me. After a while an attendant arrived with a silver basin and a towel. He helped me wash my hands and face with water smelling of musk and rose. Now when I watched my reflection in a mirror I found that I had become as good looking as that *hourie* who was assigned to me in the divine office.

As the Qur'an says, "*Arrijaalu gawwamuna alannissaa*" – "Men rule over women." (4:34)

We both sat down on the seat. On observation I found the tent standing up on five pillars. The central pillar was bigger than the rest and was studded with gems. There was a sheet of gold over it in which the gems and diamonds were fixed. I asked the *hourie* why there were five pillars in the tent. She informed me that all the tents in the valley had five pillars. This was because Islam has five pillars to support it; prayer, fasting, *hajj*, *zakaat* and *khums*, and *Wilayat*. The central pillar was the pillar of *Wilayat* which was supporting the tent. This was the most important pillar.¹⁹

I said, "I think these five pillars are after the names of the five holy ones (the Holy Prophet and his progeny)." She told me those were the pious roots and what I saw there was concerned with branches of faith. It is the reflection of the pious roots because prophethood and *imamat* was included in the roots. She continued, "The existence of all the worlds and whatever they contain are interdependent: they are part of the same design, and the apparent variation is only the result of more or less of certain component. Roots and branch, light and rays of light are only the result of excess or dearth of one or the other component. Man should try to reach all those states and become the source and secret of all effects. He should try to become the centre of all and achieve the grandeur to become the source of divine entity and God's vicegerent on earth. Whatever this vast world holds is the explication of divinity in humanity. All the capabilities were given

¹⁹ Mohaddis Qummi quotes a tradition from the fifth Imam, Muhammad Baqir that faith (*Imaan*) depends on five pillars namely, *Namaaz*, *Roza*, *Hajj*, *Zakaat* and *Wilayat*. Zarrara asked the Imam which of these was the highest and was told that *Wilayat* was the highest for the soul of all practices is *Wilayat*. The Imam finally told them that a person might pray the whole night and fasted during the day his whole life, gave away all his wealth in charity and performed *Hajj* every year, and if he followed an Imam who was not *Masoom* (infallible) Allah would not give him any return for these good deeds and would not consider him a believer.

to the nature of man, but man did not know himself. That is why the Quran in *Sura Al-Asr* says '*Innal insaana lafi khusrin*'— '*Man is a loser.*' And as others also did not recognize this divine gift in men, it is said, '*Kaana zuluman jahulaa*' i.e. 'he was a victim of tyranny and ignorance.'"

I asked, "In which school were you educated? Your speech is very effective and attractive." She said, "I was educated in the esteemed city of Medina, which is far superior to the green hills around here and the fine atmosphere around them. Remember the father of Fatima Zahra, the Prophet said, 'I am the city of knowledge and Ali its gate.' I am the product of the upbringing of the pious Lady Fatima, who, like her esteemed father, is the city of wisdom and piety. He well deserves to be like *alium baabuhaa*. She is *lailatul mubaarak* and *lailatul qadr*, and she is better than thousands of cities of knowledge. She is the one as if on whom the Quran was revealed on her. She is virtually a replica of *wa fiha lafarqu kulli amrin hakim*, i.e. all matters are destined by her. She is the Quran's '*shajratuz zaituniya. laa sharqiya wa laa gharbiya yakaadu zeetuha yaziu wa lau lam tamsashu naar. noorun ala noori.*' Fatima is *tanazzalulu malaikatu warruh fiha bi-izni rabbihim min kulli amr.*" She went on eulogizing Janabe Fatima Zahra and my whole being was moved in delight. Then she said, "This piece of writing from Janabe Fatima Zahra was given to me by Hadi, in which it was mentioned that one of her servants was coming to me and I must serve him because he is my master and lord. It appears that I am the fruit and produce of your field of virtuous deeds in the world, and God has completed your fruit of virtue in my shape and created me for you. The Quran says: '*Afa raitum maa tuhrisoon haa antum tazraunuhu am nahnuz zaariyun*'— '*Did you see the seed that you sow in the ground? Is it you that cause it to grow, or We the cause?*'(56:63-64) I praised the Pious Lord for He is all deserving of praise and in the end we say that all praises be for Allah."

Now all sorts of things for eating and drinking were brought before me. We ate and drank. Everything was so tasty that words

cannot describe their deliciousness. No eye had ever seen, nor ear heard of them in the world on earth. After we ate to our fill we sat on the seat reclining against the large velveteen pillows. I commented that the *hourie* was not native to the place. She said, "Yes, I don't belong here, but came only to welcome you. I brought this tent and all its furniture etc. for your welcome. In fact, all the tents in this valley were brought to welcome someone or the other. The people staying in these tents are those welcomed by divine orders. This is the guest house of the pious Lord. As you set out of here, I'll go back to where I came from." I said, "I wish to move about these valley orchards and tents so that I am a bit refreshed. I might see some old friends or relations." She said, "You are all free to do what you like. Remember, before entering any tent you have to salute the residents and take permission to enter. When I came here I saw the tent of your elder daughter. For your sake I went in and became friends with her. If you want to go there I may accompany you." I accepted her suggestion and we reached the tent. There I said *salam*. My daughter recognized my voice and came out with her attendants to welcome me. We saw each other and thanked Allah for this meeting and for blessing us sinners so profusely. Inside we sat on gem studded seats reclining on pillows. My daughter and her companions sat in a row facing me and my companions who also sat in a row. I asked her about what she faced during her journey. She said, "In the first stage and in the land of jealousy I faced great trouble. Perhaps in these stages everyone suffers a lot. At some stages I felt that your Dua saved me from problems. I blessed your memory every time I realized the comfort I got due to your Dua. Then another sister also started her travel after death in the world. When your death was reported I prayed to Allah not to leave my mother and other brothers and sisters helpless in the vast world." I asked her about the other sister. She said, "When she arrived here I saw that she was of a status loftier than my humble state. She told me that she was brought with comfort in carriage. She was raised to the stage

of Musaamaha, from where she was brought away in comfort." I told her that my other daughter died at an early age of 18 and she did not have time to indulge in more sins. On the other hand I lived longer and so committed more sins.

Then I went towards the orchards. Whichever tree I reached the fruit laden branch of that tree bent towards me with tasty and fragrant fruit, which did not diminish in quantity with eating. Sweet and attractive voices were coming from the trees which were saying "*O Momin, eat whatever you please.*"

Then we returned to our tent. From a distance I saw Hadi standing in front of the tent door. I ran to him and we saluted each other. He told me to get ready to set out. The *Ulema* and *Momineen* in the city came to know of my arrival and were waiting to meet me.

Chapter 10: The Valley of Barhoot

I told Hadi I was ready to set out, but my heart was sad. Hadi told me that in the Valley of Peace there was no place for sadness or sorrow. I said, "You are right, but you noticed that Hazrat Abbas and Janabe Ali Akbar are in martial attire even now. The neck of Hazrat Ali Asghar has red marks of arrow wound even now. I wish I could take revenge from their enemies." He said, "But those accursed beings are in the Valley of Barhoot, and revenge from them is the special task of the last Imam. And that depends on the appearance of Hazrat Hujjat on the earth from divine occultation." I said, "Right, but I wish to go to Barhoot and punish them with my own hands and please my heart."

He said, "Allah has appointed very strict angles over them; can you punish them more than Allah and his angles?" I repented and said, "Never! Who can punish the evil ones more than Allah and his angels? Allah is the real and supreme judge. He is not only *Rahman* and *Rahim* but also *Jabbar* and *Qahhar*. But that was my cordial desire." Hadi said, "Allah shall surely reward you for these virtuous desires, but you know that the *Noor* of a *Momin* can extinguish the fire of hell; will you bear the fact that your presence in the hell will reduce its heat for these evil ones? They would get comfort so long as you are there."

I said, "Hadi, you are right again. Can I be taken some place from where I may see them undergoing chastisement? This could solace my heart." Hadi left and went to the Prophet, Imam Ali, and Janabe Fatima Zahra and submitted my request in their august presence. When my request was submitted they took pity on me and the Prophet prayed before the Lord, "O Lord, O Eternal Allah, we the Prophet and his progeny ever submitted to your divine will, for whatever you do is for the welfare of humans. A bondsman can never think against your decree. Today, a bondsman of yours has arrived in your guest house where no sorrow can even enter; but he loves us so much that he wishes to see our enemies under chastisement without which his heart shall

remain restless and sad. Lord, grant peace to the heart of your bondsman who is forgiven by you: if the Divine Will allows, let him have a glimpse of Barhoot Valley”.

The prayer of the Prophet was vouchsafed and the divine decree was issued to allow me a glimpse of *Barhoot*. I was allowed to watch how Allah treats the enemies of Muhammad and his progeny, but a few angels were ordered to accompany me to save me from the pains of *Barhoot* and its hot wind. As soon as I got the news some companions and I made preparations for the visit to *Barhoot*. We set out with a platoon of angels guarding us from all sides. About a hundred steps ahead we reached a promontory. From that point we saw that far in the east there were dark clouds. From their congregated darkness electric arrows of different shapes were raining as from a cloud burst and the clouds appeared to be made of fire. The terrifying thunder of the clouds was reaching our ears; the angels chanted in unisons, “*Laa haula wa laa quwata illa billaah.*”

I asked the angels what it was. The angels said, “That is the valley of *Barhoot* and the fiery weapons that you see raining down in the form of arrow, lance, sword, dagger and curved weapons, are actually the curse (*Laanat*) from *Momineen* (believers) that they utter against the enemies of Ahlul Bayt. This is not the real chastisement. That divine vengeance takes place on the land of *Barhoot*. That land is red hot like the furnace of an ironsmith. There are snakes, scorpions, beasts of fire that constantly torture those cursed being.” We ascended the promontory and saw that the fiery arrows passed through the body of the victim and a single arrow, lance, sword or dagger passed through the body of several beings under torture. If any weapon fell on the ground, it got up out of its own accord and passed through several bodies. If any one tried to flee away these fiery weapons chased him and overtook him, as if these weapons had understanding. If they tried to escape, it seemed someone picked them up and threw them on the ground. They appeared as restless as corn in the pail of some one roasting corns. The sight of their torture and

constant unease delighted me immensely. I sat down on the promontory, my whole being pulsating with pleasure at their chastisement. I cried out in joy *"Allahumma la'an awwala zaalimin zalama haqqa Muhammed wa aal-e-Muhammed wa aakhiraa taabin lahu ala zaalika, allahumma an alasaabilati jaahidatil Husain aleihissalaam wa shaayat wabayaayat watabaayat la qatlihi, allahummal'an hum jamiya."* Then I said, *"Allahumma khussa anta awwal zaalimin bil'an minni wa abdaa bihi awwalan, summal assaani wassails war-raabi'l allahummal'an Yazid ibni Muaawiya khaamisan wal'an ubeidalabin ziyaadin wa umaribni sa'adin wa Shimram wa aali Abii Sufyaan wa aali Ziyaad wa aali Marwaan ilaa yaumil qiyaama."*

All the believers and all the angels repeated the two curses after me in chorus. It appeared that the number of fiery weapons increased in *Barhoot* million fold. This darkened the atmosphere with the profusion of weapons of fire pelting on the evil ones. Every enemy of the Prophet and his progeny was thrown up in the atmosphere and weapons struck him from all sides. Everyone appeared like a football tossed all around with the striking weapons. Seeing this we reiterated the curses and our voices became hoarse with shouting the curses in satisfaction. The evil ones were roasted with the fiery weapons. Their bodies looked like a sieve with holes all over. They could not die there and suffered the torture without break. In the world, they tyrannized their victims and death of those victims relieved them from their tyranny; in the other world there is no death so they cannot escape chastisement. The Quran declares *"Wainna daarul aakhirati hiyal haiwaan, wa kullama nazijat juludhum baddalnaa juludan gheiruhaa...."* - *"The other world is permanent; when their skin is burnt out, we changed their skin with a new one."*

But I observed two strange things. One, there were two individuals who were saved from the fireballs as giant fans extinguished the fire before it could touch them. Upon asking, I was told that one of them was Hatim Taai and the other

Nausherwane Aadil. These were kept in hell due to their *kufr* (agnosticism), but Hatim was a man of charity while Nausherwan was a man of justice. The quality of charity and justice is dear to Allah, who does not destroy anyone's reward and though they were kept in purgatorial hell, their positive qualities saved them from torture.

We also saw some people who, though in purgatorial hell were saved from the fire. These were men with the right faith, who loved the Ahlul Bayt and always shunned the enemies of the Prophet and his progeny. But they neglected the mandatory prayers and fasting, indulged in the prohibited matters and practice, they ate the belongings of others and owed the rights of others which they usurped in their earthly life. God forgave them His rights, but punished them with purgatorial hell for the rights of other humans because Allah loves justice and cannot forgive injustice to others. These people shall stay in hell till their sins are atoned; then they shall be blessed with deliverance from hell.

I felt relieved with the sight of *Barhoot* where enemies of the Prophet and his progeny were being chastised.

We returned from there wishing about the enemies of Ahlul Bayt saying, "*Allahumma azzibbum azaaban astigheesu minhu alhulunnar*" – "*Lord sends them chastisement from which the denizens of hell seek protection.*"

Epilogue

The original book is rather scholarly and beyond the comprehension of common man for whom the booklet is primarily meant. To keep the work from boredom for the common reader, the detailed references to scholarly classic have been reduced to the minimum in this English rendering of the book. It is addressed to the heart and mind of the ordinary believers in the true faith, the religion of the Ahlul Bayt of the Holy Prophet. It is expected that the simplified version of the work of Hujjatul Islam Maulana Syed Hasan Najafi Qochaani shall be read with edification by English-speaking Muslims all over the world. In the 21st century, the young generation has lost its wealth of Arabic, Persian and Urdu languages and literature for historical reasons and English has become virtually the first language of even those who speak Urdu or Persian at home. But many Muslim today knows how to read Arabic with diacritic marks as in the Quran or in other books of *Dua* and collections of *Suras*.

We have tried to give the English equivalent of all Arabic texts so that the English-speaking reader understands what is meant by the Arabic citations.

The work shall succeed in its aim if the common reader, man, woman (both young and old) improve their ways of life, follow the path of humility before Allah and avoid sins and performs Islam's mandatory rituals of prayer, fasting, charity, *Hajj* and *khums*, and *jihad* (which, during the occultation of the Imam of our times is *Jihad binafs* and is restricted to fighting evil desires). This mean burning the fire of irreligion in our selves and living a life of *taqwa* for this pleases God, His Prophet and the pious progeny.

This book vividly depicts the stages of the grave and what happens after the man is dead and he is buried and left by relations. The land of sexuality, the land of jealousy and of greed, the result of pride in man, the dispelling of fruits of virtue by certain sins, the existence of a Satan born with every human birth

who is called the *hamzaad* (i.e. Sayahak) and his troublesome acts, his constant misguidance of man, and the chastisement of the sinning individual, – all these are enough to warn the ignorant humans, to open their eyes to the reality of life and the invitation to man to meditate on his life and acts, are the essential lessons that this book teaches everyone. The ledger of human acts and their account closes with the grave (after shrouding and burial); what we've done in our worldly existence is the only thing that counts between burial and the *Barzakh*. We all should therefore try to collect enough rewards through virtuous deeds on earth for the interregnum between burial and the Day of Judgment. Let's pray that everyone gets an opportunity to beg Allah for forgiveness (*Tauba*) and ability to do well.

Innallaaha wa malaakatuhu yasilluyaana alannabi, ya ayyauhallazinaa aamanu sallu alehi wa sallamu taslima. God and his angels send blessing and salaam on the prophet; O, believers salute and send your blessing to him. Allah's peace be on Muhammad and his immediate family!